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meets special demands in branches admirably, is generally used for books in foreign languages, and more or less used for technical and other expensive books.

To sum up, the claim is made that a library serves the reader more satisfactorily and economically by flexible book collections in branches and a unified lending collection at the main library, combined with a good delivery service to all agencies. To this may be added the opinion that the plan develops rather than dulls the initiative of the branch librarian to whom the principles of natural selection and the survival of the fittest prove a spur to intensive study of her books and the needs of her community. She has absolute freedom to fit the one to the other, and

her success depends upon her knowledge of both and her own judgment and energy.

The chief of the circulating department at the main library carries a large responsibility, for upon her wisdom and patience much of the success of the one collection system depends. By wise manipulation the books wear out more evenly and copies of titles whose popularity has waned shift from the main library to replace discarded copies in branches until the title dies down to a few copies or is eliminated altogether.

The whole scheme is based upon coördination and can succeed only when carried through in a spirit of hearty, broad-minded coöperation with a big vision of the purpose of the library in the community. According to the spirit which animates the workers it stands or falls.

THE UNIVERSITY PRESS IN RELATION TO THE LIBRARY WORLD

BY GEORGE PARKER WINSHIP, *Widener Librarian, Harvard University*

The numerous university presses which have started during the past thirty years are supported largely by the libraries. A considerable proportion of them entered the publishing business because it is well known that a sufficient number of libraries can be relied on to buy anything that is issued under respectable auspices. They are kept going by the larger number of librarians who are unable if they once secure a volume in a series, to refuse to purchase whatever else comes out in the same form. The result has been that a great many things have been printed for which there never was any demand either from readers or investigators of anything except academic statistics. The librarians, being largely responsible for this, have only themselves to blame if they find their shelves filling with books whose impressive titles make their uselessness more pitiful. The remedy is in their own hands.

Two reasons account in large part for the present vogue of "presses" under uni-

versity patronage. One is the great prestige of the Clarendon or Oxford University Press. This more than any other single thing, except the achievements of its graduates, has made Oxford the best known institution of learning in the world. The other reason is the tradition accepted from continental practice, that a Doctor of Philosophy should be required to show his name on the titlepage of a printed thesis. The theory on which this requirement is founded is admirable, but the dreary piles of uncataloged German doctoral dissertations in some, at least, of those American libraries that have felt obliged to collect them, prove that the theory has not produced any better results in the past than in the New World.

Each university desires, quite properly, to get as much credit as it can for the work done under its roofs, and the widespread circulation of its name on printed titlepages setting forth the results of that work ought to assure this. The desire to

advertise, in an entirely legitimate way, made the university executives welcome the idea of a special press by which its name should be kept before the reading public. There is some evidence that very few, if any, of those who projected the idea or were responsible for its adoption in this country, knew precisely what a "press" is or ought to be. The establishments that go by the name of university press in America range all the way from the perfectly proper little private printing shop which is conducted as a sort of plaything for those who secured its endowment, to the very ordinary commercial publishing office which does its printing by contract and seeks a chance to exploit any author or public from whom money can be obtained. Few of them have approached anywhere near the elementary requirement of a plant equipped with an adequate outfit for the production of well-printed books of high scholarly character.

Neither the public at large nor the small part of it that has to buy books for libraries has a right to object to anything that university officials think it is wise to do. The right to complain comes when the book buying world is pestered with circulars and other advertising devices designed to create a market for goods of less than average merit by trading on the name of worthy educational institutions. Effective protest is called for when the field of the regular commercial publishing houses is invaded by subsidized competition, lacking experience, organization or established ideals.

The closely allied businesses of printing and publishing books are highly specialized branches of industry, calling for large capital, expert management and an

unusual sort of judgment if they are to be conducted profitably. A successful publisher of books depends very largely upon the good opinion of the reading public. The public is even more dependent upon the publisher for a continuing supply of the kind of books that it wants to read. This is particularly true of what are known as "serious" books, with pretensions to literary merit of permanent value. A publisher who makes money, as several do, out of the legitimate production and distribution of books of this character, has to guarantee the purchasing public against casual aberrations and ill-considered notions and every kind of sham. The editorial service which this implies is as much higher in quality than the best magazine editing, as the latter is superior, by similar standards, to the editing of a daily paper. Authors submit to the publisher's suggestions, and welcome them after they acquire experience, because they know that the underlying guiding purpose is to produce a book of which enough copies can be sold to make it profitable for all concerned.

It is this editorial service which the university presses, like the other concerns which depend upon subsidized books, do not give. It is this which accounts for the larger part of the criticism to which their output has been subjected. Until these presses put the books which they issue through as careful and impersonal a probationary preparation as is given to those that come out with the imprints of the commercial houses that have secured the confidence of well-informed readers, librarians will be justified in looking with suspicion rather than with implicit confidence upon publications with university imprints.